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# Grocery Lists

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4-5 minutes

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Many of you have heard about the new Whole Foods on Burnside that's straddling the Pearl as anchor tenant in the brewery blocks development. Some of you may have questions about this super-deluxe shop in the city. Is this the same people who own Nature's Northwest? Who is Wild Oats anyway? Are any of these places related to New Seasons? And why do upscale, hoovy-groovy markets all have two-word names that sound like a spa package? Miss Dish is on the scene.

## WHOLE FOODS

**Portland location:** 1210 NW Couch St., 525-4343.

**National stats:** 128 locations nationwide/23,000 employees.

**Claim to fame:** World's largest retailer of natural foods.

**Corporate HQ:** Austin, Texas. **Birth:** 1980 in Austin.

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**Ownership:** Publicly traded.

**Recent freebies:** All-natural beef hot dogs in a bun, risotto cakes, jalapeño bagel pieces.

**Niceties:** Perhaps the biggest salad bar Portland has ever seen, vegan doughnuts, coffee beans roasted on site.

**Prices:** Gardenburger four-pack: \$3.49; pint of Ben & Jerry's: \$3.39.

**Downside:** You can't just roll out of bed and hit the aisles: For the moment this place has become the scene to be seen--don't forget to brush your hair.

**Reputation:** This could be the right store at the right time--that is, if you have the money. Previously, downtown was serviced by what may be the scariest Safeway ever (and that's saying something) and the Stadium Fred Meyer, which is too far for the hungry Epicureans in the Pearl.

## **WILD OATS, A.K.A. NATURE'S NORTHWEST**

**Portland locations:** Seven.

**National stats:** 107 stores in 22 states and British Columbia, 8,400 employees nationwide.

**Claim to fame:** 2nd largest natural-foods market in North America.

**Corporate HQ:** Boulder, Colo. **Birth:** 1987 in Boulder.

**Ownership:** Publicly traded.

**The Nature's Connection:** In 1969, a little store called Nature's Food and Tool opened in Portland. It grew to become Portland's premier natural-foods supermarket, with several locations. After first being bought out by GNC, Nature's was acquired by Wild Oats in 1999.

**Recent freebies:** Sliced baguette and wide array of facial creams that look like dip.

**Niceties:** Tasty hot sandwiches and delightful, crusty, house-baked bread.

**Prices:** Gardenburger four-pack: \$2.39; pint of Ben & Jerry's: \$3.49.

**Downside:** Some of the stores (especially the Fremont shop) are designed in a slightly claustrophobic and confusing way.

**Reputation:** Many of Portland's founding foodies were weaned on Nature's, and this is their historic reference. Some of the recent company change-overs and the defection of management has ruffled some local feathers. Additionally, new corporate policies have tweaked out some store staff.

## NEW SEASONS

**Locations:** Four, only in Portland.

**Claim to fame (they say):** "The friendliest store in town."

**Headquarters:** Portland, Ore.

**Birth:** 2000 in Raleigh Hills.

**Owners:** Brian Rohter, president; Stan Amy; and Chuck Eggert.

**The Nature's Connection:** The owners of New Seasons were formerly top brass at Nature's Northwest.

**Recent freebies:** Olive oil, beer, and there's always fresh sliced fruit.

**Niceties:** Fresh herbs available in bulk so you can buy only what you need; a wok bar; truly friendly, responsive and spirited.

**Prices:** Gardenburger four-pack: \$3.29; pint of Ben & Jerry's: \$3.49.

**Downside:** Stores sometimes feel a little too bright.

**Reputation:** New Seasons has played the underdog well: The fact that the stores are locally owned is attractive to the city's Naderites, who are suspicious of large, distant corporations, however lefty they may appear.

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